

## DRAGON GOLD CUP

continued

conditions, particularly Schoenherr who was just sailing majestically."

He also drew some positives from his performance explaining, "my big lesson would be not to be massively disappointed that there are several gears to go up. I think we just met somebody who was just very committed, doing a lot of regattas, and who had an absolute purple patch."

Talking about the different psychology of sailing a no-



discard series he said, "I think you've got to fundamentally have confidence, that you can come back from a bad first rounding, because if you don't, you take on too much risk. I think the two Danes had the feeling that they could work their way through the field right from day one."

"You need to have that belief, and then manage your risk very tightly, because what became clear was a 15th was fine. What you've got to do is work your way through, so if you're round in 30th, it's not impossible to get to 15th, if you've got some confidence in your boatspeed and your tactics."

Even the legendary Poul-Richard Hoj-Jensen, who has won the Gold Cup four times representing Denmark, but now sails with a GBR sail number, could only manage one top six result. This is some indication of the standard and depth of talent in this fleet, which although down a little on numbers from the 100+ entries of some Gold Cups, was loaded with former winners, world champions and Olympic medallists.

## Technical Tips

### 5 – The Leeward Gate

LEEWARD GATES are becoming ever more popular as Dragon fleets increase in numbers. Making it work for you is not as easy as it looks.

Choosing the correct buoy at the Leeward Gate – this may not necessarily be the nearest buoy to you as you make your final approach.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- 1) Which side do I want to go up the next beat?
- 2) Has the wind shifted on the run? So which buoy is to windward?
- 3) Am I the inside boat? Or shall I take the other buoy in less traffic?
- 4) Who am I following? Can I round up better?

Point number 1 is very important if one side of the course paid big time on the first beat. It is better to round the buoy that will take you towards the paying side, than to take the other buoy and tack, which will sail you through the fleet of spinnakers slowly, in bad air.

Point 2 will make you watch the wind carefully towards the end of the run. Remember, for every extra boat length you sail downwind towards the buoy, you also have to sail upwind away from it!

Point 3 – don't be rafted up on the outside of a three or four boat rounding. Why not reach over to the other buoy, for clear air and a tighter manoeuvre? Giving you a better lane instead of bad air.

Point 4 – if you have to give someone water, take down the spinnaker early, go wide, stake your claim to any other clear astern boat and make a better/tighter rounding. This will give you a clear lane to continue, towards your previously-thought-out preferred side of beat.

Martin Stavros Payne

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